

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Daniel J. Pereira on 2/6/09.

The application has been amended as follows:

In claim 1 line 1 before “,” – including negatively charged particles obtained from rivers, harbors, the sea floor, or sandbanks – has been inserted; in line 3 “ $m^2$ ” has been changed to -  $m^3$  - ; in line 8 after “of” – clarified – has been inserted; in line 9 before “,” – to produce a dewatered sludge – has been inserted; and in line 11 before “.” – and has a weight-average molecular weight  $M_w$  of higher than  $1.0 \times 10^7$  – has been inserted.

Claims 5 and 10 have been canceled.

In claim 23 line 2 “flocculant” has been changed to – flocculating agent –.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to /Peter A. Hruskoci/ whose telephone number is (571) 272-1160. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Duane Smith can be reached on (571) 272-1166. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Peter A. Hruskoci/  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1797

2/6/09